

Cooperative Collection Development and Research Services: Past, Present and Future

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The future direction of research libraries clearly lies in increasing cooperation with other research libraries. This paper surveys the history of American cooperative collection programs, such as the Farmington Plan, the Research Libraries Group (RLG) Conspectus, the Library of Congress Cooperative Acquisition Program (LC-CAP), and the activities of the Center for Research Libraries as well as more recent examples such as the resource sharing program within the University of Wisconsin (UW) System, and the UNC-Chapel Hill – Duke University cooperative Africana collection. The paper explores some of the methodologies and technologies used to facilitate cooperative initiatives between libraries at the regional, national and international level. Examples include: OCLC Worldcat; shared regional system library catalogs such as the UW System's Ex Libris Alma based catalog, and shared acquisition systems such as YBP-Gobi used by the UNC-Chapel Hill – Duke University project. The paper also examines potential areas for future collaboration and cooperation, for example in cooperative research services. The paper also discusses issues that may hinder the development and future success of cooperative initiatives. The paper examines the need for a shared understanding of collective and institutional collection priorities and philosophies between institutional partners. Of crucial importance in this regard is developing a shared understanding of the appropriate balance between usage-driven acquisitions policies and the collection of infrequently used research-level materials.

Keywords: research libraries, cooperative collection development (CCD)

Introduction

As the relative buying power of American academic library acquisition budgets have contracted over the last several decades it has become increasingly evident that no single American research library's collection can be truly comprehensive. As a direct result of this, cooperative initiatives for collection and research services have become ever more necessary. The future direction of research libraries clearly lies in increasing cooperation with other regional, national and international research libraries.

As Jakubs (2015) points out, while it is possible to develop very substantial collections in very specific areas, not even the largest research libraries can meet all possible needs of its scholars. Compounding this problem is the fact that it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict exactly which materials will be of research

interest 25–50 years from now. In the case of the University of Wisconsin – Madison (UW-Madison) Libraries, a study was done in 2015 of holdings to determine the percentage of rare materials (defined as 10 or fewer holding libraries in OCLC Worldcat) in the UW-Madison collection. The results of this study show that even for English language materials, which one would assume would be widely held by American, Canadian, British and Australian libraries, seven percent of UW-Madison's English language collection was rare. The rarity percentages for other languages in UW-Madison's collection was often much higher. For Russian materials in UW-Madison's collection, 25.3 percent was found to be rare, 55.1 percent of Kazakh materials were rare and 88.1 percent of Azerbaijani materials were rare (Rare Titles Analysis, 2015). This data clearly shows that substantial amounts of material published worldwide are being acquired by a very limited number of libraries. While it is true that this study of rarity was based only on OCLC Worldcat library holdings, and undoubtedly other non-OCLC libraries worldwide hold additional copies, OCLC Worldcat is one of the primary discovery tools for locating materials for Inter-Library Loan (ILL) purposes. As is the case for regional and national cooperative collection development (CCD), for CCD to be truly effective on an international scale, the materials must be both readily discoverable and borrowable on Inter-Library Loan. Timely availability to users and cost effective processing of ILL requests are critical to the success of CCD projects. For CCD to be effective, the materials must be available to the users at all partner institutions. Thus CCD and ILL are obviously closely linked. Because of repeated extensions to copyright durations, materials are now often covered by copyright for very long periods. As a result, digitizing and making available in digital format rare or poorly distributed materials is often not a legitimate option for libraries. Therefore this situation makes print-format materials acquired by cooperative collections development programs and then distributed via ILL vitally important to researchers. While international ILL has existed in various forms for many years (Miguel, 2007), the IFLA Voucher Programme, has helped to facilitate international ILL (IFLA Voucher Programme, 2012). Therefore two of the main building blocks for successful international CCD projects already exist, OCLC Worldcat for resource discovery and international ILL facilitated by use of IFLA Vouchers. Unfortunately not all major research libraries worldwide are members of OCLC, and thus materials in their collections are not easily discoverable for ILL purposes. As the rarity data presented above demonstrates, the real problem for effective ILL may often be finding an available copy to borrow. Thus the need for both coordinated and cooperative collection development. In many regions of the world, publications not acquired relatively soon after publication become very difficult, if not impossible, to acquire retrospectively. This makes coordination in cooperative collection development partnerships critical, to ensure adequate access to research materials for scholars.

A History of Selected Cooperative Collection Development Projects in the United States

As a study of lessons learned, it may be useful to examine the history of selected CCD projects in the United States. CCD has a long history in the United States, but has experienced mixed success. At the very beginning of the 20th Century, large American research libraries were giving serious thought to developing a national union catalog. By the 1930's, in addition to the project that eventually became the 754 volume *National Union Catalog* (Abbott, 2013), specialized union catalogs such as the *Slavic Union Catalog* were also being compiled (Cannon, 2013). Both the *National Union Catalog* and the *Slavic Union Catalog* contained codes indicating the holding libraries, thereby becoming primary tools for ILL in the days before OCLC Worldcat. Thus by the immediate post-World War II period, development of discovery tools in the form of print and microform format union catalogs had progressed to the point where major national level CCD projects became more practical as well as economically desirable.

The Farmington Plan

The Farmington Plan was developed during a series of three meetings in 1947 (Wagner, 2002). For the first year of operation, 1948, the plan was limited to acquiring materials from three countries: France, Sweden and Switzerland (Williams, 1953). However by 1953, coverage had expanded to nearly a hundred countries (Williams, 1953). UW-Madison, for example, was responsible for acquiring German language material while the University of California – Berkeley was responsible for the languages of Central Asia as well as Russian (Williams, 1953). Over a half-century later, the impact of the Farmington Plan continues to be evident in UW-Madison's collection. German language materials are second only to English language materials in terms of total holdings in UW-Madison's collection. The rarity data indicates that 24.1 percent of UW-Madison's German language collection falls into the rare category (Rare Titles Analysis, 2015). It is very probable that the size and depth of UW-Madison's German collection is due in part to the fact that German was its responsibility during the days of the Farmington Plan. Unfortunately, by the late 1960's there was growing dissatisfaction with the quantity of materials being provided by the vendors contracted under the Farmington Plan. Louis Kaplan, then Director of the UW-Madison Libraries, for example, was critical of the small number of German language items being received especially in certain subject areas such as socialism and communism (Wagner, 2002). Other administrators of Farmington Plan libraries voiced similar concerns as well as concerns about whether the materials being supplied under the Plan were of research quality (Wagner, 2002). By 1968, member institutions began to drop out of the Farmington Plan and by 1971, a recommendation was made by the collection development officers of several major member institutions to terminate the Farmington Plan (Wagner, 2002). However, it should be noted

that UW-Madison was one of the institutions that made proposals in 1972 for a new CCD plan to replace the Farmington Plan (Wagner, 2002), although ultimately none of the proposals were implemented.

Center for Research Libraries

An example of a CCD project which started as a regional initiative but grew into an international resource is the Center for Research Libraries (CRL). CRL began initially in 1949 as an initiative of ten research universities in the Mid-West region of the United States (History of CRL, n.d). Membership began growing quickly, for example, the University of Wisconsin – Madison joined the next year, in 1950 (CRL Membership Univ. of Wisconsin, n.d). By 2018, more than 200 college, university, and independent research libraries in the U.S., Canada, India, Germany and Hong Kong are members of the Center for Research Libraries (CRL Membership. 2018).

CRL is a major facilitator for CCD initiatives. CRL provides a “Demand Purchase Program” for materials such as doctoral dissertations, newspapers and archival material from countries outside of the U.S. and Canada (CRL Cooperative Collection Building.n.d.). In addition, CRL members may volunteer to pool their money and jointly purchase materials which will then be housed at CRL in Chicago but be available via ILL to CRL members. An example of a “Shared Purchase Program” joint purchase is a collection of regional Imperial Russian serial publications collectively referred to as “*Gubernskie vedomosti*” (Губернские ведомости, 2006). This collection consists of serials published from 1838 until 1917. The *Gubernskie vedomosti* collection is of significant interest to scholars at several CRL institutions, but the cost was prohibitive for each interested institution to purchase their own copy of the microfilm. Therefore several institutions, including UW-Madison, collectively purchased a copy to be held at CRL (CRL Shared Purchases, 2014.).

CRL also facilitates cooperative collection and preservation projects via their Global Resources Programs. Within the Global Resources Program there are 14 geographically defined areas. For example, the Slavic and East European Materials Program, known as SEEMP, deals with materials from Eastern Europe as well as all the countries of the former Soviet Union, including the Central Asian nations (CRL SEEMP, n.d.). A very recent example of SEEMP activities is the decision made in March 2018 to microfilm a back file of the Kazakh newspaper *Qazaq Adabieti* (J. Alspach. personal communication, March 26, 2018).

Another example of a former national level CCD project was the Research Libraries Group (RLG) Conspectus. The Conspectus was developed, in part to analyze collection development needs at RLG member institutions. The Conspectus was devised in the early 1980’s to examine subject areas in such a way as to make possible distributed collection responsibilities (Gwinn. 1983). However by 1997 the Conspectus had been removed from the set of centralized RLG databases (Creating the Conspectus, n.d.). The main legacy of the Conspectus is the 0–5

ranking of collection activity (Jakubs, 2015) which is still used by American research libraries to describe intensity of collection efforts in specific subject areas.

While both the Farmington Plan and CRL both began in the late 1940's, the Farmington Plan is but a distant memory, while CRL has endured the test of time and continues to provide concrete opportunities for CCD today and into the future.

Current American CCD Projects

The Library of Congress has six Overseas Offices, located in Cairo, Islamabad, Jakarta, Nairobi, New Delhi, and Rio de Janeiro. Part of the services that the Overseas Offices provide is to acquire materials for the Library of Congress Cooperative Acquisition Program (LC-CAP). LC-CAP provides materials for over 100 participating institutions, primarily U.S. academic research libraries (LC Overseas Offices, n.d.). For example, a substantial portion of the Indonesian materials that UW-Madison acquires is received via the LC-CAP from the Jakarta Overseas Office and the majority of Iranian materials that UW-Madison acquires comes from the Islamabad Overseas Office.

Selected Examples of Regional Level American CCD Projects

The University of Wisconsin (UW) System, consists of 26 campuses within the state of Wisconsin, with approximately 170,000 students and 39,000 faculty and staff (What is the UW System, n.d.). The UW-System has an extensive library resource sharing program. UW-Madison is the oldest and largest campus within the UW-System, being founded in 1848 and having an enrollment of 43,820 students (Fall 2017) and 21,752 faculty and staff (UW Facts and Figures, 2017). However, even though UW-Madison has the largest library collection in the UW-System, there are many instances where one of the UW-System libraries has a particular item that UW-Madison does not. In fact, one of the books used for this paper (Wagner, 2002) came from the UW-M [UW-Milwaukee] library. Currently the criteria for duplicate reduction within the UW-System states that if more than four of the other UW-System campuses already have copies of a book, additional order requests must be individually justified. This obviously has the result that occasionally several other UW-System campuses will have a book that UW-Madison does not. This is by design, given the more than four copy within the UW-System limit. However, because of this limitation, it is necessary to make the local faculty and students aware that reducing unnecessary duplication may result in some campuses having a particular title while other campuses may not. In the personal experience of the author of this paper, several cases have arisen where faculty have questioned why several of the "smaller" campuses have a book, but the library at the largest campus does not. It must be explained to the faculty that it is precisely because several other UW-System campuses have it already, that we did not acquire an additional copy for UW-Madison. Tracking how many

copies of books are held in UW-System libraries is possible because all UW-System libraries use the Ex Libris Alma library management system and share a UW-System wide union catalog. Thus acquisitions staff at each UW-System library can immediately see what has already been ordered or acquired by all the other UW-System campus libraries. Overall, this “One System – One Library” model has been quite effective in providing enhanced access to library resources for students and faculty state wide (One System – One Library.n.d.), while at the same time limiting unnecessary duplication.

An example of a similar but slightly different system is demonstrated by the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill – Duke University cooperative Africana collection project. In the case of the UNC–Chapel Hill – Duke CCD project, they avoid duplication by agreeing to use the same vendor, YBP – Gobi (Swindler, 2013).

CCD projects can also be quite cost effective for electronic resources. In addition to the print resources mentioned above, the UW-System provides joint access for all UW-System campuses to 22 major electronic resources (Library Program Office, n. d). This allows the smaller UW-System campuses to provide access for their students and faculty to relatively expensive databases that they could not otherwise afford.

Another example of a CCD electronic resource project is a joint subscription to the *Russian Academy of Sciences Bibliographies* database (Schaffner, 1999). In this case, six major research libraries which are members of the MidWest Slavic and Eurasian Library Consortium (MidWest, n.d.), share a single subscription to this database. This database is very useful for finding recent Russian language scholarship, but the overall usage on each campus was not sufficient to warrant separate subscriptions for each university. UW-Madison is one of the six universities involved in this CCD project, and were it not for the shared subscription model, UW-Madison would simply not be able to afford to maintain access to this very useful but relatively low usage database.

Cooperative Research Services

Cooperative Collection Development is but one way that research libraries can collaborate. Research Services or Reference Services can also benefit from consortial level collaboration. In addition to the UW-System consortium, UW-Madison is also a member of the Big-10 Academic Alliance, known as the BTAA. This consortium of 14 major American research universities, cooperates in many areas, not only library services. Recently, four of the BTAA university libraries, including UW-Madison, have begun preliminary discussions towards the development of a cooperative research services project. While this proposal is still in its early stages, it is envisioned that the initial focus would be on providing in-depth research services for doctoral students as the target user group. Each of the four university libraries, would provide a list of subject areas where they have both

exceptional collections and have professional librarians qualified to provide high-quality reference and research consultations. While this proposal is only in the discussion stage, the involved parties believe it holds great promise of providing advanced dissertation stage graduate students the highest quality reference service, while allowing them to remain within the local region.

Conclusions

As Jacob (2015) so eloquently pointed out, trust is a key element to any cooperative venture. Schaffner (1999) describes how loss of trust can jeopardize an established CCD project. Although in the end, that project survived, the loss of trust can cause an unwillingness to engage in future projects. Trust is also important when developing the shared understanding of collective and institutional collection priorities and philosophies between institutional partners which is critical to the long term viability of CCD projects. Variations in weeding policies, for example, may limit the trust that if the acquisition of an item is left to a partner institution it will be retained long term. For example, whereas for the most part UW-Madison does not weed its collection, most of the smaller UW-System campuses do routinely weed their collections.

Of crucial importance in regard to developing collective and institutional collection priorities and philosophies is developing a shared understanding of the appropriate balance between usage-driven acquisitions policies and the collection of infrequently used research-level materials. A casual perusal of OCLC Worldcat will show many books with hundreds of holding libraries, but on the other hand, other books with only a single holding library. While one must applaud the librarian who chose to collect the only copy of a book to make it into a library, this points out the flaw in usage based collection development. For cooperative collection development to work on a worldwide scale, research libraries must be willing to spend at least a portion of their collection budgets on materials which may not be used for many years. If there is no copy available, the ILL process simply breaks down. Recently I was contacted by one of our graduate students who is writing a Ph.D. dissertation on aspects of 1920's and 1930's Soviet cinematography. He needed to consult a book published in Moscow in 1940. OCLC Worldcat only showed one copy, and it is in a library in Japan. To make a long story short, I was eventually able to acquire a digital copy for our user. Out of curiosity, once I had the book, I looked at the colophon to see the print run (тираж) thinking it must have been very small. It turned out the print run was 3000, yet only a single copy had made it into the collection of an OCLC member library. Where did all the other copies go? Of course many non-OCLC member libraries in Russia may hold this book, but from an American ILL standpoint, if it does not show up in OCLC Worldcat, it becomes much more difficult to obtain on ILL. The commonly held high-usage books will be collected by many libraries and be easily available for the foreseeable future. It is the low usage materials that need the attention of

research libraries, and it is those low-use or rare materials that may benefit most from Cooperative Collection Development.

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